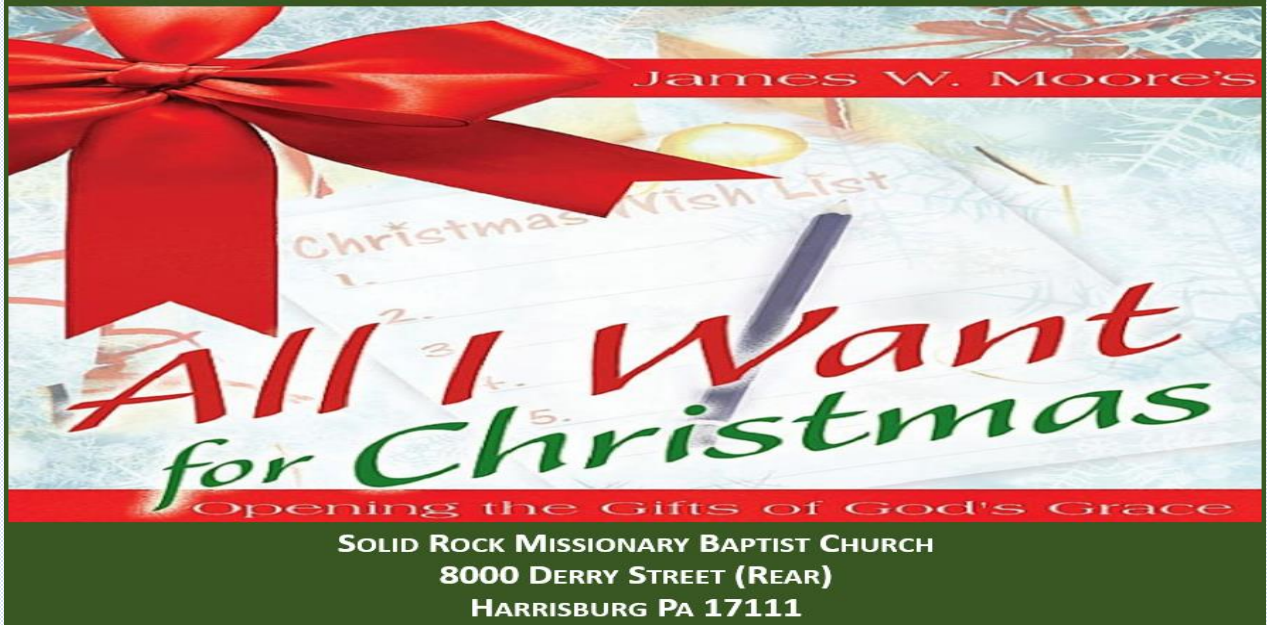


SRMBC FAMILY BIBLE STUDY



All I Want For Christmas - Opening The Gifts of God's Grace

SRMBC Bible Study Schedule Nov – Dec

| Date | Lesson Topic | Scripture |
|------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| 11/20/2019 | The Gift of Good News | Matthew 1:18 – 25 |
| 11/27/2019 | Thanksgiving Break | No Study |
| 12/4/2019 | The Gift of a New Understanding | Luke 1:39 – 56 |
| 12/11/2019 | The Gift of a Strong Foundation | Joshua 24:14 – 15 |
| 12/18/2019 | The Gift of a New Style of Living | Matthew 23: 23 – 26 |

All I Want For Christmas - Opening The Gifts of God's Grace

All I Want For Christmas - Opening The Gifts of God's Grace

Lesson 1: *The Gift of a New Understanding*

Luke 1:39 – 56

All I Want For Christmas - Opening The Gifts of God's Grace

Group Discussion: Describe a time in your experience, or in the experience of someone you know, when life's direction was changed by one event or decision.



Alastair Sim as "Ebenezer Scrooge"

Ebenezer Scrooge is a rich, greedy, selfish and angry old man. On the 7th anniversary of the death of his partner Jacob Marley on Christmas Eve – Scrooge is visited by 3 Ghosts of Christmas. The encounter with the ***Ghost of Christmas Future*** represents the final chance for Scrooge to change his ways.



*"Ebenezer Scrooge"
A changed man*

Questions

- How does the experience with the **Ghost of Christmas Future** at his own gravesite affect Scrooge?
- What was the change in Scrooge? When have you felt a similar joy in your life?
- How did his housekeeper respond initially? How does Scrooge convince her that he's changed?
- What some ways we can express the joy of Christmas and share it with others?

Who Were Mary and Elizabeth?

Mary The Virgin: The Mother Of Our Lord.

- She was of the tribe of Judah and of the lineage of David.
- She was a cousin to Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist.
- She was engaged to Joseph of Nazareth; but with child Holy Ghost,
- She became the mother of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world.
- As an encouragement to Mary, the Angel was given the news of Elizabeth's miraculous pregnancy.
- Upon meeting Elizabeth, Mary breaks out in a song of praise to God: The Magnificat (*Latin: "Magnificat anima mea Dominum" My Soul Magnifies the Lord*)

Elizabeth: The Mother of John the Baptist

- The wife of Zechariah, the Priest - they were both "righteous and blameless" before the Lord (Luke 1:6).
- The Angel Gabriel appeared and said Elizabeth despite her old age would have a child. (Luke 1:18)
- In the sixth month of her pregnancy, Mary visited her - The Holy Spirit told Elizabeth of Mary's condition.
- Elizabeth's and Zechariah's son would grow up to be John the Baptist - the prophet who prepared the way of the Lord Jesus.



Mary and Elizabeth

All I Want For Christmas - Opening The Gifts of God's Grace

Luke 1:39 – 45 (NKJV)

Mary Visits Elizabeth

39 Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah,

40 and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth.

41 And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

42 Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!

43 But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

44 For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

45 Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord."

All I Want For Christmas - Opening The Gifts of God's Grace

Luke 1:46 – 53 (NKJV)

The Song of Mary

46 And Mary said: "My soul magnifies the Lord,

47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.

48 For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.

49 For He who is mighty has done great things for me, And holy is His name.

50 And His mercy is on those who fear Him From generation to generation.

51 He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

52 He has put down the mighty from their thrones, And exalted the lowly.

53 He has filled the hungry with good things, And the rich He has sent away empty.

All I Want For Christmas - Opening The Gifts of God's Grace

Luke 1:54 – 56 (NKJV)

54 He has helped His servant Israel, In remembrance of His mercy,

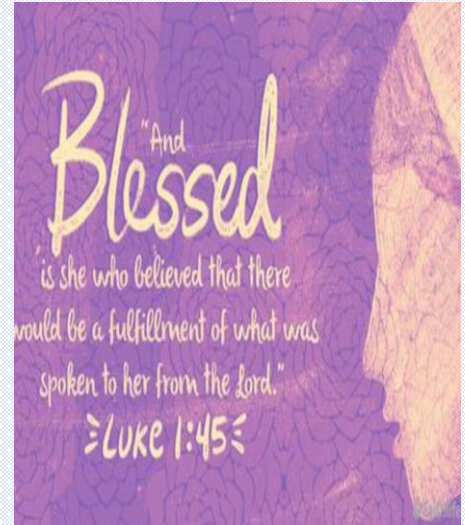
55 As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and to his seed forever."

56 And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her house

All I Want For Christmas - Opening The Gifts of God's Grace

1. In what way would the information given by the Holy Spirit to Elizabeth encourage Mary and strengthen her faith?

- The confirmation of what God has promised to do in her life.
- The assurance of God's power to do the impossible.
- The confidence in God's ability to keep those who belong to Him.
- The anticipation of God's plans for salvation in Jesus Christ her Son/Savior.



Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus... (Eph. 3:20 – 21)

All I Want For Christmas - Opening The Gifts of God's Grace

2. How would you compare and contrast Mary (1:34 – 38) and Zechariah's responses (1:18 – 20)?

And Zacharias said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years." (Luke 1:18)



When Zechariah questions Gabriel about the possibility of conceiving, the angel makes it clear that he is silenced because he "**did not believe my words**, which will be fulfilled in their time" (Luke 1:20)

When Mary comes for a visit, Elizabeth greets her saying, "**Blessed is she who believed** that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord" (Luke 1:45).

But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time. (Luke 1:20)"

Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" (Luke 1:34)



Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her (Luke 1:38).

All I Want For Christmas - Opening The Gifts of God's Grace

3. Read Mary's song of praise (Luke 1:46-55) closely and count all the instances of reversal that she proclaims (such as God lifting up the lowly and pulling down the powerful).

| <u>The Current Reality</u> | <u>The Reversal</u> |
|--|--|
| For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant | For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed... |
| He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. 52 He has put down the mighty from their thrones, | And exalted the lowly |
| He has filled the hungry with good things, | And the rich He has sent away empty. |



*And Mary said: "My soul magnifies the Lord,
And my spirit has rejoiced in
God my Savior."*

All I Want For Christmas - Opening The Gifts of God's Grace

4. How do these reversals point to a new understanding of the world in which we live?

- As hopeless as things look today, we can have assurance that our God is still in control.
- The Evil that is currently in the world will not stand. Our great and powerful God will set things right in the end.
- In Christ, we have a glorious future ahead of us – riches already laid up for us in Heavenly places.
- The trials and tribulations we face pale in comparison to the wonderful future ahead of us.
- God has given to us (believers in Christ) the privilege of joining Him awesome mission of Reconciling the world through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.



"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

1 Corinthians 2:9 (KJV)

King James Bible Online .org

All I Want For Christmas - Opening The Gifts of God's Grace

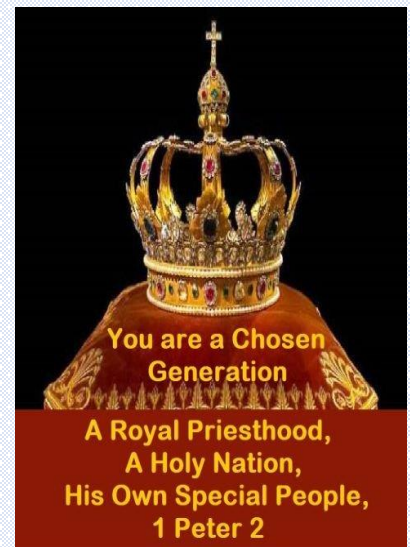
5. How does Mary describe herself in her poem to God?

| Mary's Description | Remarks |
|--|---|
| My soul magnifies the Lord, | Her innermost being is dedicated to praising the Lord |
| And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior | She has unspeakable Joy in the knowledge of Her Saviour and being Saved |
| lowly state of His maidservant; | She sees herself as nothing without God and everything with Him |
| generations will call me blessed. | She acknowledges the blessing of God (past, present, future) on her life. |
| has done great things for me | She acknowledges that God has done Great things for/in her |

All I Want For Christmas - Opening The Gifts of God's Grace

6. How does Mary's song give you a new understanding of God and who you are in Him?

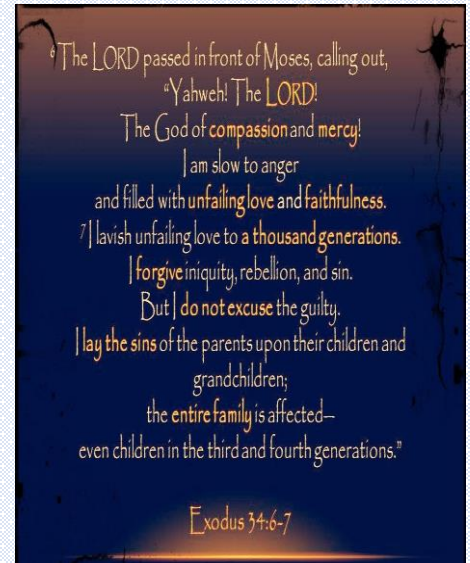
- I am Reminded that I have been created and called for the purposes and praise of God.
- I am Loved by God and have been gloriously saved by the sacrifice of His Son – Jesus.
- God desires to direct His power and blessings for me because I am His Child.
- God has all Power and is in control of this world and of my life. I can trust Him to do what is best for me.
- God has committed to me an important part to play in the spread of the Gospel and redemption of the lost.
- I am secure in the anticipation of the eternal blessings the God has promised to me and all who have faith in Christ.



All I Want For Christmas - Opening The Gifts of God's Grace

7. What aspects of God does she describe that are different from your usual expectations?

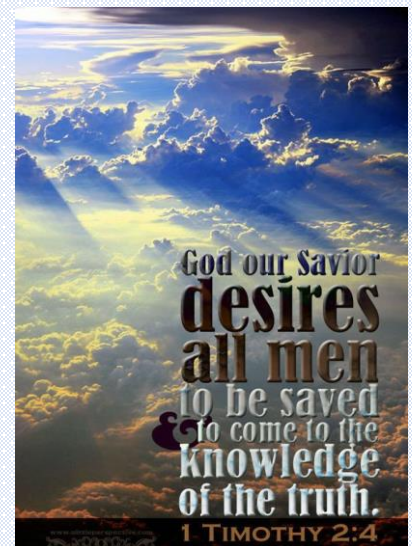
| | |
|---|--|
| My Soul magnifies the Lord, | God is Worthy Of All Praise |
| God my Savior. | He has Saved me from sin and it penalty |
| will call me blessed mighty has done great things | He is the One who has and blessing me |
| And holy is His name. | He is Holy and Righteous |
| His mercy From generation to generation. | He is Full of Mercy |
| He has shown strength with His arm; | He is All-Powerful (Omnipotent) |
| He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has put down the mighty from their thrones and exalted the lowly. | He is Lord of All – Sovereign Rule and Judge over everyone and everything. |
| He has helped His servant Israel, In remembrance of His mercy, As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and to his seed forever." | He is Faithful to His Word and To His People and Promises. |



All I Want For Christmas - Opening The Gifts of God's Grace

8. How does the message above challenge you to see other people differently? How might this become a part of God's larger purpose of life and salvation?

- There is a challenge to see people not simply as different or difficult but people that God loves and longs to know Jesus as Savior.
- This a Challenge to see my Church family as fellow workers and teammates in God's Gospel mission.
- Those who are bent to do evil and reject God, are to be pitied when we know that unless they repent they will face the Awesome wrath and judgement of God.
- With all this in mind, there is a greater Challenge to share the True Meaning of Christmas – the Birth of Jesus the One who came to save us from our sins.



All I Want For Christmas - Opening The Gifts of God's Grace

Advent Prayer

Lord God, you are the one who gives sight. Open our eyes to see you differently, to see our neighbors differently, and to have a fresh vision of our purpose in your world. Give to us this day a new understanding, so that we might see ourselves as you see us. Help us to know the height and depth of your love, so that we might rest in it and share it with all others.

Amen.